

"its role is to be that of an agency whose main function will be the programming and planning of an economic basis to aid watermen and others engaged in the seafood industry to earn a better living."

I believe it can be said, four years later, that the Department of Tidewater Fisheries has performed this function ably and effectively. In that speech, made at the Tidewater Fisheries School of Washington College, I deplored the fact that oyster production the previous year — 1958 — had sunk to the lowest level since the depression years — to a "meager 1,968,894 bushels." Well, if that yield was "meager," let us consider what has happened since. The production last year — as all of you know, I am sure — was only 1,254,000 bushels, the lowest in the recorded history of the industry. *This trend, of course, is depressing and discouraging, but I am informed, by those who are knowledgeable in the field, that these production figures do not reveal an accurate picture of the situation today.*

By those who are knowledgeable in the field, I mean such experts as Joseph Manning, the Director of the Department of Tidewater Fisheries, and Dr. Eugene Cronin, Director of the Natural Resources Institute, both of whom are here this evening. They and others advise me that we have every reason to believe that the bold program which we initiated during the first year of my administration is beginning to produce dividends — that the future of oyster production is bright. This, I might emphasize, is not just wishful thinking. Oyster production for September of this year, for example, was up 23 per cent above the production of September, 1962. All the other data at hand, I am informed, are equally encouraging.

The program we have in Maryland to strengthen and enliven the seafood industry I consider to be a cooperative effort of government, on the one hand, and on the other, of the industry itself — the tongers, the crabbers, the dredgers, the clammers, the shuckers, the packers, the dealers and all the others engaged in the production and marketing of seafood. Your State government acknowledges its responsibilities in the field, our Department of Tidewater Fisheries, the Department of Economic Development, the Natural Resources Institute of the University of Maryland and other State agencies are engaged in a diligent effort to restore an industry which is of vital economic importance to Maryland. This organization — the Chesapeake Bay Seafood Industry Association — bespeaks the interests and concern of the industry in our project.

I have been deeply impressed by the caliber of men who have accepted the industry's responsibility in this field, and I hope that every